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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

NEW WHITE DEPARTMENT

OF

THE HOUSE OF REFUGE,

On June 1st, 1854,

IN CELEBRATION OF THE OPENING OF THAT DEPARTMENT OF THE
INSTITUTION, FOR THE RECEPTION OF INMATES.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM BIGLER,
GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PHILADELPHIA:
T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.
1854.

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(COPY.)

PHILADELPHIA, *June 7, 1854.*

SIR : At a stated meeting of the Board of Managers of the House of Refuge, held yesterday, the following resolutions were adopted, viz:—

“Resolved, That the thanks of this Board are due to Governor Bigler for his interesting and appropriate address, delivered at the new buildings of the Department of the House of Refuge, for White Juvenile Delinquents, on Thursday, June 1, in celebration of the opening of said buildings for the reception of inmates.

“Resolved, That a committee of six members be appointed to communicate the above resolution to Governor Bigler, and to request of him a copy of his address for publication.”

In accordance with the second resolution, we would now ask the favor of you to furnish us with a copy of your address for publication.

Very respectfully yours, &c. &c.,

THOS. EARP, ISAAC COLLINS, JNO. BIDDLE, FRED. A. PACKARD, JAMES J. BARCLAY, WM. S. PEROT.	}	<i>Committee.</i>
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TO HIS EXCELLENCY WM. BIGLER, GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA,
HARRISBURG, PA.

HARRISBURG, *June 10, 1854.*

GENTLEMEN: I have been honored by the receipt of your favor of the 7th instant, covering a resolution of the Board of Managers of the House of Refuge, requesting for publication a copy of an address which I had the pleasure of preparing for the occasion of the opening of the new buildings of that Institution.

In reply, I take great pleasure in tendering to the Managers my acknowledgments for the high compliment implied in their request, and in saying that a copy of the address shall be placed at their disposal.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WM. BIGLER.

THOS. EARP, ISAAC COLLINS, JNO. BIDDLE, FRED. A. PACKARD, JAMES J. BARCLAY, WM. S. PEROT,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
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27 Mar 24 g. Burton Hist. Collection.

ADDRESS.

Gentlemen Managers of the House of Refuge—

Ladies, Gentlemen :

THE invitation, so kindly extended to me, to participate in the ceremonies of this occasion, I have accepted with diffidence. Surrounded by the cares, responsibilities, and labors incident to official station, I have had but little time to devote to the important and pleasing task which your partiality has assigned me. To these circumstances I must appeal to plead my apology with you for a feeble and imperfect performance of the obligation I have assumed. Indeed, the general design, the organic features, and the varied details of this institution, together with its practical workings, are suggestive of such vast considerations, and the topics presented for discussion are so prolific of useful thought, that the work, though "a labor of love," might deter one from attempting its performance, however ample his time and opportunities.

The discovery of the sources and causes of crime, and every species of immorality that degrades the social and moral condition of our race; the arrangement and adaptation of preventive and remedial agencies to mitigate these evils; the nature and degree of punishment that should be inflicted upon offenders against the peace and order of society and the rights of individuals, are problems which have, within the last half century, to a greater extent perhaps than in any former age, occupied the attention and commanded the best efforts of the statesman and philanthropist. That much good has resulted from these humane and benevolent efforts, must be obvious; but that there is still a mighty work to be done, if not a growing task, is equally true.

W.C.

Complain, however, as we may, of human depravity, and the vitiated state of society in many of its phases, the gratifying truth is nevertheless apparent, that the condition of man is undergoing a silent, though mighty and happy change. The greatest agency in this work is Christianity. Its benign influence, diffusing itself into all the pursuits of life, aided by the wonderful inventions of mind, which have so materially contributed to social and commercial intercourse, is doing for man what ages of Paganism failed to accomplish. The contrast presented by society developed under the auspices of Christianity, and that created by the best forms of heathenism, will well sustain the truth of this assumption, as well as manifest the divinity and power of that pure religion taught by our Saviour. In the most brilliant periods of Grecian and Roman rule, civilization never approached the standard of that we now enjoy; and our special gratitude is due to Him who rules the destiny of nations, for the inestimable blessings thus conferred upon his creatures.

Where, indeed, in all the dark ages of Paganism, can be found the record of a scene like this? A nation or city devoted to the reformation and moral welfare of man! To the mitigation of human suffering! To the elevation of man from the degradation of vice, of crime, and infamy, to the dignity of virtue and usefulness! Temples and triumphal arches were, it is true, reared and dedicated to the victor in battle, but seldom if ever were institutions established for the alleviation of human distress. If ever suffering humanity received a tribute from Paganism, it was in the form of popular enthusiasm over the agonies of the dying gladiator, and not in the effort to supply remedies for the moral evils which beset our race.

Unlike this dark spirit, Christianity comes as a harbinger of peace and virtue, to liberate and humanize, not to enslave and degrade. Its divine mission is to elevate and improve the condition of man upon earth, and to point his way, to a happy future. If at times its march has been slow, or impeded by ignorance and intolerance, its ultimate triumph is not the less certain and enduring. Its mighty impress is visible upon all our social and civil institutions. It is manifested in the beautiful and costly temples of worship that adorn your city; in your schools and colleges; in your asylums for the relief of the widow and orphan; in your

institutions for the deaf and dumb, the imbecile and idiotic. We feel and see it in the stillness and repose of the weekly Sabbath; we hear it in the sound of the church-going bell, and we witness it here to-day, in the magnificent effort you have made to carry into practical operation its principles of pure benevolence. Free as the air we breathe, and separated from all alliance with the state, its spirit pervades society, and sheds its healing influence through all our institutions, and thus metes out improved degrees of civilization.

In the great work of preventing crime; of dispelling ignorance; of inculcating correct moral principles; of elevating the social and moral condition of man; of eradicating from society those diseases that deprave our race, and so fatally attack the young and unwary; many may become discouraged, because their efforts are not crowned with immediate and entire success. This should not be. The hope that centres itself on the entire extirpation of evil has not been wisely fixed. The expectation is neither natural nor philosophic. Perfection in human society, prior to the millennium, has not been promised. Besides, it should not be forgotten that, in the proclivity to error which marks the human career, there is an agency whose origin is not in earthly institutions. The sad inheritance of our apostasy furnishes this powerful tendency in our nature to evil. It is peculiar to no age, or nation, or class; nor is it the exclusive heritage of ignorance and destitution, but rather the fatal possession of all—the learned and affluent—the ignorant and debased. It is the moral disease of our common humanity; the great fountain from whence flow the turbid streams of sorrow and crime, which corrupt society. For this moral disease, we must point to the remedial influences of a pure religion. We know of no other complete and efficacious remedy. Human philosophy, it is true, has, in different ages, attempted the task; but its plans have ever proved chimerical and abortive. Leaving for the present the consideration of such instrumentalities for the prevention or suppression of crime as belong appropriately to the Christian philanthropist, let us take a hasty glance at those which legislators have employed.

The history of criminal jurisprudence establishes the fact that, until the latter part of the last century, neither mercy for the offender, nor measures of any description for his reformation,

formed a part of the penal codes of Europe, or of those of the American colonies. The spirit of vengeance pervaded them. Were it discovered that a given species of offence or crime was on the increase, laws more sanguinary were at once adopted. If the whipping-post, the tread-mill, the dungeon, and banishment seemed to have lost their terrors, the scaffold was substituted, and culprits were swept by scores from the face of the earth. But little, if any discrimination was made between offences resulting from ignorance and misguided destitution, and crimes committed by the hardened and desperate villain. An offence of wayward youth, which at this day, and in our country, would consign the juvenile perpetrator to a House of Refuge or Reformatory School, at that time would have been punished by a cruel corporal infliction, or banishment, if not by death. But with all this severity crime increased. The offender appeared to feel a pride, if not a sense of resentment, in defying the vengeance of the law.

This excessive severity of the penal code, however, has happily been mitigated, in most of the countries of Christendom. The dungeon and the scaffold have to some extent given way to milder and more just forms of punishment. And systems have been adopted, having in view the reformation of the offender. This is especially the case in our own favored land.

But our attention is called to the particular occasion of this meeting, *to the House of Refuge*. Of the many agencies devised by the wise, the patriotic, and the humane, for the protection of society, the prevention of crime, and the relief of the unfortunate, there is none which more forcibly commends itself to our admiration and support. For myself, I must be permitted to say, that I can scarcely find language to express the delight and confidence which a somewhat minute examination into its design and practical operation has excited in my mind. I can sincerely declare, in the language of the late DE WITT CLINTON, "that I regard it as one of the very best institutions that has ever been devised by the wit or established by the beneficence of man," to accomplish the end designed.

It is now more than a quarter of a century since the attention of the founders of this institution was drawn to the urgent wants of a helpless and disgraced class of your population, for whose relief and reclamation the law and the institutions of the country

seemed to provide no adequate means. At that time, as well as now, your city and the surrounding country contained a community of idle and vagrant youth; often parentless and homeless, without education or moral training; and whose inevitable destiny seemed to be a career of ignorance, of vice and crime, ending in imprisonment and perpetual disgrace. In the judgment of these good and right-thinking men, the chilling and hopeless infamy of the prison was a cruel and unwise punishment for this helpless and irresponsible class of offenders. They established the House of Refuge, for the relief and reformation of these unfortunate creatures. The very name is suggestive! A REFUGE! A retreat from the baleful influence of older associates matured in vice and crime; from the haunts of ignorance, of drunkenness, and destitution! And how happily it combines the ends of justice and mercy. It vindicates the law, protects society, and yet adapts itself to the wants of the offender, and if possible, bestows the richest blessings upon him, by eradicating from his mind the seeds of vice, and implanting therein the lessons of religion and morality.

The leading object of your admirable institution is the moral and intellectual reformation of juvenile offenders; and in the efforts to accomplish this work, it is wisely assumed that, even under the most forbidding circumstances, there is still a redeeming quality in human nature, especially with the young. "It is," says an able writer on the subject, "designed to take cognizance of crime in its embryo state, and redeem from ruin, and send forth for usefulness, those depraved and unfortunate youth who are sometimes in a derelict state, sometimes without subsistence, and at all times without friends to guide them in the paths of virtue." Of the wisdom and utility of its general design it were scarcely necessary to speak. Its good works are too obvious and manifold to leave room for doubt or speculation. It is not only by the direct blessings it bestows on those who become its inmates, that its merits are to be measured. Its mission is not only to stand between the Criminal Court and the Prison, and claim the juvenile delinquents, with the view to their reformation; but its spirit goes abroad into the streets and alleys, and breaks up the evil associations of the idle and vicious. It relieves the helpless, and perhaps criminal parent, from the care and

charge of a refractory child. It gathers from the haunts of vice and wickedness the ill-disposed and erring youth, and deals with them with the kindness and judicious consideration of a guardian and friend. Its prominent characteristic is to temper justice with mercy: to blend together the proper restraints and corrections with the kindness and sympathy of fraternal affection. How just! How generous and humane! How truly benign in its entire organization and purpose! Here is the school for the illiterate and ignorant; the church, the family worship, and the sabbath-school, for the reclamation of the wicked; the workshop and factory, for the training of all in some useful occupation.

But the inquiry may arise. Has it, and can it succeed in the great object of its institution? I answer affirmatively—and to my mind, the most touching evidences of its success are found in the eloquent testimonials of those who have been recipients of its favors. A very few instances, taken at random from the many annually reported by the Managers, I must introduce to your notice. They tell the story of the "Refuge," in the language of simplicity and truth, and reflect its true character through its works.

"I hope you will allow me," says one, who had been convicted of an infamous offence, but who had been completely reformed, "to tender my gratitude to the officers and matron of the House of Refuge, for their great kindness to me. *I have been saved from ruin and misery.*"

A guardian writes: "E. H. is generally obedient, is honest, and I believe speaks the truth. He has improved in his employment, and is a very good boy."

Another writes: "J. C. sustains a good character for honesty, sobriety, and industry. He is an excellent boy to work, is ambitious and steady."

"I have been agreeably disappointed," says another, "in getting a boy from the Refuge. Instead of getting a bad boy, and difficult to manage, as I was fearful, we have a good boy, in every respect. He sends his thanks to you, for your kindness and care over him. He wishes you to tell the boys to be good, and try to get to the country to live."

Another writes: "F. is quite correct in her deportment, indus-

trious, prudent, and conscientious. She frequently expresses her gratitude to those who had charge of her at the Refuge."

"J. M. has conducted herself much to our satisfaction. She has shown much quickness in learning her duties."

"C. J.," says another, "sustains a good character as to sobriety, honesty, and industry, and commands the respect of his superiors and comrades."

Another guardian writes: "J. K. will make a good farmer. He will make a very nice man if nothing happens to him. His disposition is good, and I like him very much."

The guardian of J. F. says: "It would be impossible to get a boy to suit me better. I think he is the best boy in the neighborhood, at least my neighbors say so."

Another says: "Edward improves as fast as the common run of boys on the farm. He learns very fast at school, is honest, and obedient." And again, says another: "I have nothing in P. M. but perfect honesty, in fact, he strives to do what is right in every case."

The Refuge was opened in 1828, and up to the first of January, 1854, it had received 3,945 girls and boys, a very large portion of whom have thus been saved from infamy and ruin; and many of them, very many, indeed, as I can well believe, have become useful and influential members of society. I know a number of such. I have frequently met a young man, who had been an inmate of this House of Refuge, and I could bear personal testimony to his merits.

On the first of January last, the inmates numbered 364, of whom 280 were boys, and the remainder girls. During the year, 376 were received and 334 discharged. This was up to the capacity of the buildings then occupied; but these in which we are now assembled are calculated to accommodate nearly double that number of subjects.

The first House of Refuge in the United States, was that in the city of New York, established in the year 1825. This Institution was next founded, in the following year. Since that period the system has continued steadily to grow in favor, and there are now in operation two such institutions in the State of New York, two in Massachusetts, one in Louisiana, one in Ohio, and one in

Rhode Island; while in many other States of our Union, Houses of Refuge are in course of erection.

It affords me heartfelt pleasure to add that I have been informed that the buildings of the Western House of Refuge, located at Pittsburg, rapidly approach completion, and that they will probably be ready for the reception of inmates early in the ensuing fall. From the zeal and high character of the gentlemen who have the matter in charge, we may be assured of its triumphant success.

The general rules and regulations of your Institution exhibit in simple and expressive terms its true character and intention; and nothing I could say, would impress us with a stronger sense of its practical value and importance, than a mere recital of the daily routine of studies and duties inflexibly imposed upon the inmates.

The first, and most important duty enjoined, is to impress upon their minds the advantages of a moral and religious life, and the terrible consequences of vice and crime. Without this, all other teaching would be incomplete. In truth, it would be cruel to the youth to turn him adrift upon the world, with his conscience untouched by a single moral impression. To cultivate the intellect alone—to teach him to read and write, without removing the evil habits and propensities, which he had contracted in his former career, would but partially accomplish the work. Such, however, is not the intent or practice of your admirable Refuge. In the true spirit of benevolence, you seek to make the inmates wiser and better, whilst you furnish them with the means of attaining an honorable position in some of the useful pursuits of life.

It is required that they shall be employed, on an average, four hours in school, and seven or eight hours at some mechanical or other labor, each day.

The hour of rising, in the morning, going to school, beginning and ending work, are indicated by the ringing of the bell. Sundays, Christmas, and Thanksgiving days, are devoted to worship and religious instruction. The females are at all times separated from the males; and each inmate has a separate dormitory. All are classed according to their conduct; and good behavior for five successive months, entitles the inmate to a badge of honor. Neither spirituous liquor nor tobacco may be used, nor, during

the periods for recreation, are any games allowed which have a tendency towards gambling.

The rigid enforcement of these rules has the additional value of inculcating practically the virtue of restraint. I term it a virtue in this connection; because, without restraint, rigid, exacting, and unswerving, it would be idle to attempt the reformation of those who have so far lived without it. Not the harsh and repulsive restraint of the prison cell, into whose chilling portals no ray of sympathy ever penetrates, but rather that of a judicious parent, who inflexibly though kindly controls a wayward and reckless child.

Amongst the admirable arrangements that have increased, if possible, my confidence in the future of this Institution, is the fact that, in the execution of its details, the active agency of woman is to be employed. Her spirit is to preside in some departments at least. And to whom could the work of disinterested benevolence be more properly confided? Her heart is the fountain of the purest affection, and her influence over the obdurate and wicked, is ever the most soothing and powerful.

“Her might is gentleness—she winneth sway
By a soft word and a sober look.”

Let her voice fall in tones of kindness and love on the ears of even the wayward and vicious, and deep from the inmost soul of such will come up a response, indicating a return of moral sensibility, and that the heart is not all evil—that there is still hope of reformation.

This agency of love and benevolence will at all times be essential to the triumph of the Institution. Not a sickly sentimentalism, but an active and vigilant principle. There is no redeeming influence so potent as a pure and disinterested affection. “It is mightier than the sword of the magistrate, or the armies of the monarch, to conquer evil.” It will touch the heart hardened against all other influences. It will say to the reckless transgressor, in the only language he can understand, that he is not an outcast from his race. Depravity must, indeed, have wrought a fearful moral change in that soul, where there lingers not a single chord responsive to the manifestations of goodness. Even the raging maniac is subdued by its influence. In it consisted the

secret of Howard's power over the degraded, the wicked, and violent. In it was found the magic spell that flowed from the lips of Elizabeth Fry.

“Would'st thou a guardian angel seem
To one who long in guilt hath trod?
Go kindly to him—take his hand,
With gentler words, within thine own,
And by his side, a brother stand,
'Till all the demons are dethroned.”

But let us turn for a moment from the mere arrangements of the Institution, to notice more particularly the objects of its care. Possibly some may be ready to inquire, why all this labor, this preparation and care for youthful offenders? Why not impose upon them the stern demands of the law? We answer, because many, very many of these unfortunate creatures cannot be properly rated as accountable. Often the victims of shameful parental neglect, and in some instances of wilful parental degradation, their offences are not their own. They sin habitually, if not unconsciously. How shall a youth who never perhaps witnesses a virtuous example, find out the ways of truth and wisdom? How shall he who has been reared in the midst of sin and depravity, learn to respect and observe the rights of others, or to deport himself consistently with the rules of society? How shall the child understand the duty it has never been taught, or resist the influence of an evil parental example? How shall he escape the infection of a moral disease, if constantly subjected to it in its most malignant type? Can it reasonably be expected that a child shall unaided escape the evils of intemperance—that most prolific of all the causes of vice and crime, and that which, since it can be removed, most loudly demands efficient action to eradicate it—can it, I repeat, be reasonably expected that a child shall unaided escape the evils of intemperance, if continually surrounded by drunken parents and associates, or be induced to attend church or the Sabbath-school, whilst his parents and associates go, in preference, to the brothel and gambling house? To hope for a voluntary reformation, under such circumstances, would be as unreasonable as to expect to gather “grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles,” or to look for a “pure stream from a corrupted fountain.” The sympathy between the parent and child is natu-

rally strong, and under these forbidding circumstances must almost inevitably lead the latter captive in the ways of transgression. And shall such unhappy victims, thus allured into the paths of vice and crime, by the most powerful and sacred ties that operate upon the human heart, be made to endure the vengeance of the law—be doomed to prison—to lasting disgrace—to be forever cut off from society? Mercy, with the consent of Justice, answers no! The House of Refuge, in a voice of true benevolence, answers NO!

Another class, not so numerous as that just named, are the victims of penury and want. Often parentless and homeless, struggling for mere animal subsistence, with no hand to guide them, they wander and beg through the day, and steal in the dark; and yet they are not so bad as the hardened villain who delights in crime. Imagine the little, half-clad sufferer, pierced by the bleak winds of winter, on the corner of a dark alley, where the clothier exposes his fabrics; or see him again, pinched with hunger, tempted by the exposed meats and fruits of the grocer, and answer me if he has no incentive to steal, beyond the evil intent of a bad heart? If such be consigned to a prison, even for a short period, how certainly do they return, when dismissed from confinement, to their old associates, and how generally do they repeat the offence!

But I would not be understood as intimating that offences of any grade or class, however low or insignificant, should be overlooked or forgiven without correction. My object is to indicate a degree to which reformatory efforts should extend. There is, on the other hand, a class of hardened offenders, whose diabolical crimes almost exclude them from the range of mercy or hope, and whose deprivation of the liberty of the citizen is demanded by the safety of the community. For such there can be but little sympathy. But for youthful and far less hardened offenders, reformatory measures are sanctioned by justice and a wise public policy.

The statistics of crime in England, of a recent date, contain much evidence of the truth of this position. Mr. Pearson, in a statement to a committee of the House of Lords, in 1847, shows that the number of criminals under twenty years of age committed to prison in 1835, was 6,803; and that in 1844, they amounted

to 11,348, about one third of whom, he says, had been previously committed for like offences.

The Inspector of the Prison at Liverpool, in 1840, reports that 66 per cent. of the male convicts for the year, were youths who had been previously in prison; and the startling fact that 28 out of each 66 who had been previously committed, had been in jail four times! In the metropolitan districts, the recommittals amounted to 35 per cent. on the whole number of convictions, and in the other five jails in England, to 32 per cent. The Chaplain of the Liverpool Prison, in a report in 1847, says: "It is pleasing to notice that, while the instances of relapse of juveniles into crime, in 1843, 1844, and 1845, have ranged from 49 to 52 per cent., for the year 1847 the recommitments were only 41 per cent." A Judge Shaw, at Dublin, in 1849, said that "about one-third of those tried before me have been convicted of former offences." Other instances could be given, but these will suffice to show the correctness of the position assumed.

On this point, it is remarked in the *Journal of Prison Discipline*, for the year 1851, in better terms than I can employ: "No wonder that offenders against the laws, on liberation from prison, with none to care for them, associate and combine together. Hence the pauper child, who absconds from the almshouse, and is punished by imprisonment, is drawn into the companionship of thieves; the infant beggar, who only obeys the parent's orders, and is imprisoned, becomes numbered among criminals; the vagrant child, who sleeps in some out-house or archway, when he has no better place to rest in, is taken to jail, and thus begins his downward career; the incipient, untaught, unfed, juvenile delinquent, who, without fear or knowledge of the laws of God or man, commits some petty theft, and is whipped, imprisoned, and discharged, takes his place among the enemies of society. Thus, felons, burglars, and highwaymen are produced. Our neglect of common sense, not to say of Christian means of prevention, is the national manufactory of abandoned criminals. When shall we become wise? When will the nation seek to prevent crime by instructing the fallen in the precepts of our holy religion, and by training to habits of industry, the destitute and the depraved? Should we even wait for their incarceration in jail, or graduation as felons, ere we attempt their reformation? Ought we not to discontinue to associate the

earliest recollections of our juvenile offenders with prisons, and cease the pursuit of a system, which, from the data of past experience, makes daring and skilful marauders? Ought we not to make more use of the school and the spade, and less of the policemen and the prison?"

To illustrate still further the idea that this class of criminals should be reformed rather than punished, let me relate a few practical incidents. The schoolmaster in Newgate, tells the story of a boy, in 1831, "who came into his father's breakfast room, and seeing nothing to eat, exclaimed: 'What! nothing for breakfast? O! wait-a-bit.'" He then went out, and in a quarter of an hour returned with a rump-steak and a pint of rum. He had gone out and stolen a piece of linen on Ludgate Hill, and sold it for the trophies he brought back. This boy was transported for theft when he was only fourteen years of age. How clear it is, in such a case, that the parent should be punished, and the child sent to a reformatory school. The same author informs us that there are whole families of boys and girls in London, who, with the consent and under the direction of their parents, devote themselves to theft. He describes the lamentations of a mother, on receiving the news of the sentence of transportation against the seventh son she had lost in the same way. "Ah! I know not," says she, "what I shall do, now poor Ned is going! He was a good lad to me, and though I say it myself, he was as good a hand at this business as any in London. Now, there's little Dick, my eldest son's boy, I think he will never make the man his father was. He is dull; besides he is only eight—he is not old enough for a good cross business." It were sheer barbarity to sentence a child reared under such auspices to a felon's cell. Every moral sensibility of the child's nature had been perverted by the force of a pernicious parental education and example. It had been made the duty, the interest, the pride and pleasure of the boy, to steal. He was sensible of no wrong, except the disgrace of being caught and of failure in his profession. Humanity and justice would indicate for such offenders a reformatory system of punishment.

Speaking of juvenile offenders, a learned jurist, of a neighboring State, remarked: "If such delinquents are liable to be treated when punished, in the same manner as the older and more hard-

ened, it will be almost impossible to arrest their progress in depravity. Most men shrink with repugnance from harshness towards youth. The prospect of making them convicted felons is repulsive. These little victims have never been taught the laws of God or man; or, if they have, it has only been that they may despise them! If any punishment should be inflicted, the rod of the master would be more suitable than the prison. How deeply does it concern the community, to take these little creatures by the hand, when they shall have committed the first offence; withdraw them from contamination and guilt—provide the means of industry and education—soften their minds to the reception of religious and moral truth, and gradually, by gentle treatment and wholesome discipline, lure them into habits of order, truth, and honesty. Is there any greater duty in a Christian country than this?"

An inquiry in this connection very properly arises, what else can be done? what auxiliaries has the House of Refuge, for the prevention and correction of juvenile delinquency? What agents can be employed to relieve it of an excess of subjects for its discipline? The teachings of the domestic institution—the precepts and examples of the family circle—and the influence of education, are to my mind the most potent in preventing crime, and in disseminating pure moral principles.

The domestic institution is the most sacred, universal, and cherished of all the forms of human government. The relations it creates, and the responsibilities it imposes, are of the most delicate character and important concern. Its heads are united by the most endearing ties of our nature, and the entire family circle is bound together by those fine feelings of affection and sympathy, that are seen and felt in no other relation of life. The active and mutual sympathy ever existing between the parent and child, imposes upon the former a deep responsibility. Every word and action leaves its impress upon the juvenile mind. The affections and inclinations in early childhood may be moulded by the parent, like clay in the hands of the potter. In another part of this address, I have given some sad instances of this parental power when devoted to the work of vice and crime; and though it may not be so triumphant in imbuing the youthful mind with pure moral and religious principles, because of the natural proclivity to evil, yet it may

be claimed as one of the most efficient agencies in this work. It precedes all other influences, and when properly and timely directed acts upon the flexible mind, before the conscience is seared by evil thoughts and propensities. The parental lesson thus given falls like seed upon good ground, where there are no thorns or thistles to choke their growth, and where they may spring up and produce an hundred-fold. Here is the most favorable opportunity to prevent juvenile delinquency. The child who is thus early trained by the correct precepts and virtuous examples of his parent, will find those precepts and examples, in after life, a strong shield against temptation. They become a guide to his feet, and a lamp to his way. His inclinations are thus set against wickedness, and he has no delight in the drunkenness and debauchery that may surround him. His habits and principles incline him to the ways of wisdom, and the paths of peace. The formation of such a character is generally the work of a mother. The family circle is her legitimate field of operation. By the wise provisions of nature, her relations with the juvenile flock are the most intimate, and her responsibility is incessant and grave indeed. Wherever she goes, whatever she may say or do, she exerts an influence for good or evil, on her tender offspring, and contributes towards the formation of their general character in life. Her government should, therefore, be distinguished by affection and sympathy; by firmness and fidelity; and above all things, by a scrupulous regard for truth. In the exercise of the authority she wields, she should use the utmost care never to mislead or deceive her child; never to command without insisting on prompt obedience; never to threaten and then neglect to execute; never to promise and then fail to perform. Let her rules of government, whatever they may be, at all times be strictly enforced.

Thus the family institution, acting at the very portals of society, is felt in all its departments, and exerts a powerful influence upon all the functions of civil government. It rests at the very basis of civilization, and may be said to underlie all other social and civil institutions. In the work of educating the young, and training their moral faculties, it is therefore an auxiliary to the school and the church. If its influence be corrupt and vicious, the labors of the schoolmaster and minister will have but little

effect in making either learned or moral citizens of children thus misled. First impressions are generally received within the family circle, and parents should seek to administer the rules of domestic government with due regard to this truth. If afflicted by a disobedient child, they should remember the sacred axiom: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes."—And also the injunction: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The inclinations given by the parental hand, will probably mark the tendency of the offspring through life—so true is the trite saying: "As the twig is bent, the tree inclines." The first step in error is certainly attended with the most difficulty; each successive one with less. And the hardened wretch who expiates his horrible offence upon the scaffold, can generally remember a time when, as a boy, he required encouragement by older and viler associates to induce him to take the first step in his career of crime. How true the language of the poet:—

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace!

Education and moral training in schools, next to the influence of the domestic institution, contribute most essentially to the prevention of immorality and crime. There is natural truth enough in this proposition, to carry conviction to the minds of the most skeptical, and it can safely be treated as an axiom. The effect of this potent agency, is to develop the intellect, to elevate the moral faculties, to raise man above the animal creation, and fashion him after his Maker. I am aware that I can be pointed to instances of the perpetration of the greatest crimes by persons of education. But exceptions to a general rule, rather strengthen than weaken its force. Besides, there may be intellect without conscience, and when I speak of education in this connection, I have reference to the qualities of the heart, as well as those of the head. I certainly cannot be mistaken in the belief that, were society to take entire charge and control of the destitute and vagrant youth that are found in our cities and larger towns, and to send them to school, the effect would be to lessen materially the aggregate of juvenile delinquency. But we

are not left to theory and speculation alone to maintain this position. There are stubborn facts in the history of the past, which may be relied upon as evidence of its truth. The New York Prison Association for the year 1850, say that examination into the causes of crime, leads them to this result: that neglected education is the prolific cause of most of the crime amongst us. Of 732 convicts at Auburn, 517 were never instructed in any trade, or calling; 371 were intemperate; 468 had received no moral instruction, and 512 had never read the Bible, or attended Divine worship.

The Secretary of the State of Massachusetts reports the whole number of committals to Prisons and Houses of Correction, for the year 1853, at 13,927, of whom about one-half could neither read nor write.

The Hon. Wm. D. Kelley, in an address delivered at the opening of the other branch of this institution, in 1849, presented statistics demonstrating that a large proportion of the convicts in the Criminal Courts, and of the delinquents assigned to the House of Refuge, were very deficient in the rudiments of an education.

In Great Britain, in 1849, in a report exhibiting the degree of education, amongst the criminals of that year, it is stated that out of 41,989 offenders, 31,340 were males, and 10,649 were females. Of the former, 6,484 could read and write, 3,000 could read only, and 12,151 could neither read nor write, and of the remaining 9,676, no information could be obtained. Of the females, 935 could read and write, 1,500 could read, and 5,877 were totally ignorant.

The Minister of Justice in France, in his annual report of 1849, says: That out of the whole number then in the Department of the Seine, 3,355 could neither read nor write, and 326 were to some degree persons of education.

A comparison of the condition of Spain with that of England, indicates most clearly the alliance between ignorance and crime. The people of the latter escape the scourge of crime, in about the ratio that they stand in advance of the former in the work of education.

The statistics of Scotland and Ireland, furnish unmistakable evidence to sustain the same view. And in the criminal statistics

of France, as compared with Prussia, the same striking fact is observed—the latter possessing the highest degree of education, and exhibiting the smallest percentage of crime. The same condition of things exists in other parts of Europe, but nowhere is the fact more apparent than in a comparison between the criminal statistics of Great Britain and those of the United States, deducting from those of the latter the convicts who are not citizens of the country.

The natural proclivity of ignorance and superstition to vice and crime, is abundantly evinced in other and less civilized parts of the world; and in their history the fact is amply attested, that a benighted intellect and distorted moral perceptions are found the fruitful sources of cruelty and crime. The history of Tartary, Hindoostan, Benin, and other petty states of Africa; of New Zealand and the Sandwich Islands, and the Islands of the South Pacific, prior to their moral transformation, is replete with testimony to sustain the position. The destruction of infants, the drowning of aged parents, the offering of human beings in sacrifice, the barbarous tortures inflicted on the vanquished in battle, are the fearful consequences of moral obliquity and human depravity. It is to ignorance, and its natural offspring superstition, that the vices and barbarities of the ancient pagan world are to be mainly attributed. And if we turn our eyes to the actual state of society around us, we shall find the same causes operating. Who are most frequently engaged in brawling and debauchery? In the commission of theft and other petty offences? In rioting, turbulence, and disorder? Are they not, for the most part, the rude, the ignorant, the untutored—those whose moral instruction has been sadly neglected, by their parents and guardians, and whose wayward inclinations have led them to turn a deaf ear to the voice of wisdom and truth?

But it is scarcely necessary to pursue this idea further. Enough has been presented to show the transcendent importance of general education to any people. I hold it as amongst the highest duties of government to provide for the education of the people, and especially for the poor and helpless “who have a claim founded in nature.” Nowhere is this obligation more sacred or imperative, than in a government like ours, whose very foundations rest upon popular will, and whose stability and efficiency depend

upon the virtue and intelligence of the people. True political economy not less than moral obligation indicates this duty. A distinguished philanthropist of Europe said: "It were wise to give pence to infant schools, and thereby save pounds in the expenses of jails, bridewells, tread-mills, transportations, and executions." "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is a saying as true of social and moral as of physical diseases. A wise economist has said: "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves;" and it may as truly be said, let government take care of the young, and when the young become old they will take care of the government. This will be placing the axe at the root of the evil.

In conclusion, let us dedicate this magnificent structure, so complete in all its arrangements and spacious in its departments, to the great work of mercy and justice, for which it has been reared. It is the natural result of that enlarged generosity and comprehensive benevolence, which has at all times so distinguished the people of Philadelphia. In its object and intent—in its devotion to the good of others, we have an apt illustration of the humane and benevolent principles of the illustrious founder of your great city, whose goodness and genius seems stamped and impressed upon every page of your history. In its practical workings, I am confident it will reflect the real beauties of our republican and social system of government. It will be a REFUGE in the true sense of the term. A home, a school, a guardian and friend for the parentless and destitute, who may sin, from the force of their unhappy condition. A master and rod of correction for the wayward, the vicious and refractory. Within its spacious apartments let all such be gathered, not to be punished and disgraced as criminals, and then returned to their old associations to repeat their offences; but to be cured if possible of moral pollution; to be instructed in the rudiments of education; in lessons of virtue and truth; to be trained to habits of industry and obedience; to be made "wiser and better," and thenceforth to go abroad into the world, shielded by the benign principles thus imbibed, and taking their positions in society as useful and honorable members, bearing willing and emphatic testimony to the merits of this noble charity.

What a gigantic work! It were enough to startle the most

sanguine, and yet I am free to predict for the Refuge, a brilliant triumph in the accomplishment of the task.

It was the proud boast of the Romans that, "whilst the coliseum stands, Rome shall stand." The thought was vain, for "Time's effacing finger" ever points to the fallacy of human expectations. The humbled pride and departed grandeur of the once mistress of the world are a fitting commentary upon worldly ambition. But in the benign principles of your institution you have the grounds of a rational, a far more religious belief, that, long after the proud structure you have erected shall have crumbled to dust, the results of its practical and genuine benevolence will remain your most fitting monument, and, through all coming time, exercise a healthy influence upon the peace and welfare of your beloved city and commonwealth.

NOTE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLICATION OF GOVERNOR BIGLER'S ADDRESS avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by its general distribution, throughout the various counties of the State, to call the attention of their fellow-citizens to the recent change in the law, relative to the mode of committing subjects to the House of Refuge. The law, as amended, provides that "the Managers of the House of Refuge shall receive under their care and guardianship, infants under the age of twenty-one years, committed to their custody by two Judges, the President Judge being one, of the Court of Common Pleas of any County in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (which said District shall embrace all the counties of the Commonwealth, from which infants cannot be sent to the 'House of Refuge of Western Pennsylvania'), except the County of Philadelphia, in which said infant resides or may be found, on complaint and due proof made to them by the parent, guardian, or next friend of such infant, that such infant is unmanageable, and beyond the control of the complainant, and that the future welfare of said infant requires that such infant should be placed under the care and guardianship of the said Managers of the House of Refuge; or when said complaint and due proof shall be made by the prosecuting officer of the County, that said infant is unmanageable, or a vagrant, and has no parent or guardian capable and willing to restrain, manage, and take proper care of such infant."

And it further provides that "the said Judges shall carefully examine the complaint made to them in the presence of the complainant and infant complained of, and for the purpose of bringing the parties and witnesses before them, shall be fully authorized to use such process of the Court as may be necessary; and where the said Judges shall adjudge an infant to be a proper subject for the care and guardianship of the said Managers of the House of Refuge, they shall, in addition to their adjudication, transmit to the said Managers the testimony taken before them, on which their adjudication was founded, and the said testimony shall be taken under oath or affirmation of the witnesses, and in the presence of the party complained of."

By the above-named change in the law, it will be perceived that the opportunity is now afforded for the commitment of subjects *without a trial by jury*, from any County of our State from which infants cannot be sent to the "House of Refuge of Western Pennsylvania," at Pittsburg. Heretofore, this right of commitment without a trial has been confined to Philadelphia County, and consequently a large proportion of the inmates have been received from this county. But it is confidently believed by the committee, that in future a large number of subjects will annually be received from other sections of the State, and hence they deem it of great importance that the nature of the institution, and its proper sphere of operation, should be generally known throughout the State; and for the purpose of disseminating correct information on these topics, they here present a few very brief remarks in relation thereto.

The House of Refuge is a *Manual Labor Reform School*, designed for the reformation of juvenile delinquents; it is *not* a prison for the punishment of offenders; hence, the earlier in his career of delinquency, and the younger in years, that a subject is committed to the institution, the more effective is its disciplinary training likely to be.

And, to avoid vexatious mistakes, the committee would further state that the institution is *not* designed for an asylum for the imbecile or the maimed, nor for a hospital for the weak and sickly, nor yet to supplant the almshouse; but simply *for the reformation of juvenile delinquents*.

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